



**Testimony of Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
Before the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
Boston, Massachusetts
June 13, 2007**

**RE: SB420 "An Act to Establish Collaborative Drug Therapy Management to Improve
Pharmaceutical Care for Patients in Massachusetts"**

Good morning. On behalf of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences (MCPHS), I thank you for the opportunity today to address you on behalf of MCPHS regarding Senate Bill 420 - An Act to Establish Collaborative Drug Therapy Management to Improve Pharmaceutical Care for Patients in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts College of Pharmacy with campuses in Boston and Worcester is the largest college of pharmacy in the United States. Founded in 1823, the college has a 180 year tradition of educating health professionals. The School of Pharmacy offers a six-year program leading to a Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree as well as an accelerated three-year program out of our Worcester campus for students who already possess a bachelor's degree. Students follow a curriculum that combines general, specialized, and applied science courses with those in the liberal arts, preparing them for an increasingly visible role on the healthcare team. In addition, required experiential courses provide opportunities to learn while practicing in areas such as ambulatory, community, and institutional pharmacy, industry, long-term care, and regulatory agencies.

Senate Bill 420 provides an important opportunity for qualified pharmacists to more fully incorporate those skills which are being taught in today's pharmacy curriculum in order to more effectively serve the pharmaceutical needs of the patient. Most recently, the federal government recognized the value of pharmacists as an integral part of the health care team by allowing medication therapy management by pharmacists as part of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. We believe passage of CDTM in Massachusetts is consistent with this new initiative embraced by Congress.

At MCPHS, as in all pharmacy colleges around the country, we are preparing professionals who are uniquely qualified to provide enhanced pharmaceutical care, especially to many patients with chronic diseases who require continued monitoring and drug regimen review.

The proposed legislation is designed to create an expanded role for pharmacists in today's health care team. Collaborative Drug Therapy Management (CDTM) is a process whereby the pharmacist may engage in several activities that enhance the safety and cost effectiveness of medication therapy as well as greatly enhancing the quality of life for many patients. Under a voluntary agreement with a physician, pharmacists would be allowed to more effectively monitor and control the pharmaceutical care provided to many patients in Massachusetts. The net effect of this effort would be a reduction in unnecessary telephone calls, delays in treatments and frustration on the part of health care providers and patients.

Specifically we believe that CDTM will have the following direct benefits to Massachusetts residents:

- o Improve Disease and Drug Therapy Management
- o Reduce medication errors and enhance drug therapy monitoring
- o Reduce preventable hospitalizations from Adverse Drug Events
- o Reduce preventable nursing home admissions
- o Reduce the cost of drug treatment
- o Reduce the cost of unnecessary and dangerous drug therapies
- o Improve quality of life and extent the ability of seniors to live in the community

As MCPHS is uniquely qualified to highlight the academic requirements of pharmacy students today, and you will hear more from several of our faculty members about the preparation and training of our students to participate in CDTM. Attached please find a listing of specific areas of training that are provided to our students to prepare them for graduation.

The Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences have been working with a coalition of supporters of this legislation, including members of the pharmacy and regulatory community to ensure passage of this vital piece of legislation. Over the past two years this coalition has worked very hard to specific areas of concern to ensure that the compromise piece of legislation before you offers additional assurances. These include the following: specific language regarding liability insurance; limitations for pharmacists working in community pharmacies to engage in selected disease states and additional language regarding qualifications of pharmacists who wish to engage in Collaborative Drug Therapy Management (CDTM).

Currently there are 43 states in the country that allow some form of Collaborative Drug Therapy Management. To date, despite many years of experience by many states that permit CDTM, there have been no documented cases of any negative outcomes, but rather, demonstrated cost savings and better patient outcomes as the result of this voluntary initiative between physicians and pharmacists at a time when patient safety and patient cost are paramount.

We believe that passage of enabling legislation is a critical first step to accomplish the abovementioned goals. Accordingly, we would encourage members of the Committee to support passage of Senate Bill 420.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Katherine Keough, Executive Director, Government Affairs & Continuing Education

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Academic Prospective

At MCPHS, the School of Pharmacy in Boston provides essential knowledge and skill sets necessary for our students to become qualified competent, providers of patient care. It is our responsibility to prepare students for practice as a pharmacist for today as well as the future. With this in mind, the national accrediting body for Schools of pharmacy asked all School of Pharmacy across the country to transition away from the Bachelor of Science degree as the entry level degree in pharmacy into a 6 year Doctor of Pharmacy program. With this transition in our curriculum came an added focus of providing patient care and managing a patient drug therapy. In this new curriculum students are engaged in:

Year 3

- Normal body functions (6 semester hours total)
- Abnormal functions and disease processes (3 semester hours total)
- Biochemistry (6 semester hours total)
- Drug Development (7 semester hours total)
- Managing a practice (2 semester hours total)

Year 4

- Health care ethics regulations and the laws governing the practice of pharmacy (5)
- Pharmacokinetics -The Science of Medication distribution within and removal from the body (5)
- Pharmacology – the study of how drugs work (8)
- Medicinal chemistry – The chemical structure of medications (6)
- Research methods (2)
- The study of viruses, bacteria and microbes (4)

Year 5

- Disease State Management (14)
- Poisons and substance abuse (2)
- Evaluation of medical literature (2)
- Practice Management (4)

Clinical Experience

Beginning in the fourth year students engage in preliminary activities in community and hospital pharmacy settings. This continues into the fifth year. In their last year students engage in 36 weeks of advanced clinical training in a variety of settings. Total experience then varies but correlates to about 1500 hours or more.

In conclusion, we believe the classroom preparation, combined with the advanced clinical requirements of our students provides more than enough training for our students to participate in CDTM in voluntary arrangements with physicians in the state.